



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter

Tuesday, October 14, 2008

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor Harry Watson.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

Members Absent: Councilor Bond and Councilor Brown-Tracy

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Councilor Kolnaski

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2008-0211 Proclamation Recognizing the Dedication of the Tercentennial Legacy Playground

Read

The proclamation was read by Mayor Watson.

2008-0231 Proclamation Recognizing Morton F. Plant Day

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Streeter.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2008-0239 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of September 16, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2008-0228 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Various Donations - \$607.87 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Heather Dubrule - \$5.00 - Tercentennial Miscellaneous

James R. Marshall III - \$100.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Susan Decorte - \$249.86 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Joellen Anderson - \$1,000.00 - Library Discretionary
John Sutherland - \$150.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Joseph D. Kane - \$10.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0241 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Various Donations - \$240.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
City of Groton Matching Funds - \$30.31 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0234 Contract Agreement Between the Groton Board of Education and the Groton Public Schools Paraprofessional Association

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0236 Potential Change to the Non-Union Retirement Program

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0237 Appointments to Task Force on Climate Change and Sustainable Community

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0201 Groton Community Boating Club Board of Advisors - Town Council Liaison

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0223 U.S. Department of Justice Grant

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0224 Relocation of Roller Hockey Rink

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0227 Connecticut Municipalities 2008 Special Funding Initiative Grant Revised

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0229 Hunting on Town Owned Property

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0233 Resolution Approving Amount of Bonds to be Issued in FYE 2009

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0238 Resolution Approving Amount of General Obligation Sewer Bonds

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.
The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Monteiro, along with Mayor Watson, Councilor Streeter, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, and Councilor Bond, attended the dedication ceremony of the Tercentennial

Legacy Playground and the Fall Festival. Councilor Monteiro received an email regarding the self-guided Mystic River historical walking tour and two emails regarding the economy and the budget.

Councilor Schmidt received the same emails mentioned earlier. She attended the Thames Street Rehabilitation Committee meeting at which it was voted not to make Thames Street a one way road. Councilor Schmidt noted that the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the movie "Mystic Pizza" will be on October 17, 2008.

Councilor Sheets received a communication requesting the Town to make significant budget reductions. She stated that on October 15, 2008 the Water Quality Management Draft report will be presented and encouraged all to attend the presentation. Councilor Sheets mentioned that on the Town website there is an area for a citizens' alert signup. This will allow police and emergency crews to contact those who have signed up to receive up-to-date information on emergencies. Councilor Sheets, along with Councilor Bond, toured the greenhouse and laboratories at Fitch Senior High School.

Mayor Watson attended the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the dedication of Town Hall, a Council of Governments meeting, and a joint Groton Business Association/Chamber of Commerce meeting. He was present at a breakfast at the USCG Academy with the military, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Education. The Mayor attended a presentation regarding rapid watershed assessment, a bond rating meeting with Standard & Poor's, and a Community Children First program. Mayor Watson was also in attendance at a recognition ceremony for World War II veterans at Fitch Senior High School.

Councilor Streeter received emails regarding property taxes, the walking tour, and budget reductions. Representative Wright also sent a communication regarding a meeting between Groton and its State representatives.

Councilor Bond arrived at this point in the meeting.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

Members Absent: Councilor Brown-Tracy

Councilor Kolnaski attended the 100th Anniversary of the dedication of Town Hall, a "eat dinner with your family" event, a Community Children First meeting, and a Permanent School Building Committee meeting. She was present at a Ledge Light Health District meeting and noted that there will not be flu shots at the Senior Center this year, but individuals can get flu shots at various other locations. She was also present at the World War II veterans recognition ceremony, and thanked Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz and John Casey for all their hard work.

Councilor O'Beirne attended the recognition ceremony for World War II veterans, noting that Councilor Kolnaski was one of the veterans honored. He received the same emails mentioned earlier regarding taxes. In addition, he received emails expressing concern about the preliminary report by the consultant that is rewriting the land-use and zoning regulations. As a result of those concerns, Councilor O'Beirne obtained a referral from the Mayor. Councilors will receive a copy of the report along with status reports on the project from Town staff.

Councilor Bond received emails concerning taxes, and an email regarding the greenhouse and gas in the laboratories at Fitch Senior High School.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The RTM met on October 8, 2008 and did not approve the funding for the Esker Point Beach shelter.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk stated that both the Town Clerk's and Registrar of Voters' offices will be open on October 28, 2008 until 8:00 p.m. In addition, the Town Clerk's office will also be open on Saturday, November 1, 2008, for absentee ballots. She noted that absentee ballots are for necessity (i.e., physical illness, absence from town, working at the polls, etc.), not for convenience. Those utilizing an absentee ballot must have a valid reason.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager stated that there will be a drinking water quality Water Management Session on October 15, a Martin Luther King Scholarship Dinner on October 16, and the dedication of the new salt shed facility on October 17. The ground-breaking for the animal shelter will be on October 17, the 20th anniversary celebration of "Mystic Pizza" on October 17, a meeting of the Committee of Chairpersons on October 20, and a CCM Expo in Hartford on October 22.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

Mayor Watson stated that the items discussed in the Committee of the Whole will be voted on later in this meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

2008-0201 Groton Community Boating Club Board of Advisors - Town Council Liaison

APPOINTMENT OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON TO GROTON COMMUNITY BOATING CLUB BOARD OF ADVISORS

WHEREAS, the Town Council wishes to support the activities and goals of the Groton Community Boating Club, an activity of the Department of Parks and Recreation, through a Council liaison to the Board of Advisors for the boating program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council appoints Councilor Rita M. Schmidt as its liaison to the Board of Advisors.

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be

Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0223

U.S. Department of Justice Grant

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANT FOR INVESTIGATION EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice will provide funding to municipal police departments to purchase specialized, covert audio and video recording equipment for the investigation of crimes involving illegal trading in firearms and narcotics, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton will collaborate with State and Federal law enforcement to prevent the proliferation of firearms among drug dealers and gang members, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger may apply for a grant of \$9,600 from the U.S. Department of Justice Project Safe Neighborhood/Gang funding initiative.

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Sheets, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0224

Relocation of Roller Hockey Rink

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING RELOCATION OF THE ROLLER HOCKEY RINK

WHEREAS, the Groton Senior Center expansion project is scheduled to begin shortly, which will necessitate the relocation of the Town's roller hockey rink to make room for an expanded Senior Center parking lot, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has considered several alternative locations for the roller hockey rink facility, and

WHEREAS, roller hockey is a highly popular recreation program that should be allowed to go on with as little interruption as possible, and

WHEREAS, relocating the roller hockey rink south of its current location, toward the Groton Public Library, will allow for prompt restoration of play, and will only impact a low-use/sub-par soccer field, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizes that not all of the funding for relocating the rink has been determined at this time, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the relocation of the roller hockey rink south of its current location as soon as feasible.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0227

Connecticut Municipalities 2008 Special Funding Initiative Grant Revised

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONTRACT WITH STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR 2008 CONNECTICUT SPECIAL FUNDING FOR MUNICIPALITIES INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, funding to the Town of Groton via the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services as part of the 2008 Connecticut Special Funding for Municipalities Initiative has been approved, and

WHEREAS, such funding is specifically designated for the support and/or development of case management and related support services to the Town's senior population age 60 and older, and

WHEREAS, Groton Human Services and the Groton Senior Center provide comprehensive case management, programs and support services to Groton senior citizens, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has heretofore, via Town Council resolutions #2008-0110 and 2008-0111 authorized the Town Manager to apply for such funding, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Mark Oefinger, Town Manager, Town of Groton, is hereby authorized to make, execute and approve on behalf of this corporation, any and all contracts and amendments and to execute and approve on behalf of this company, other instruments, a part of or incident to such contracts and amendments effective until otherwise ordered by the governing body.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0229

Hunting on Town Owned Property

RESOLUTION CONCERNING HUNTING ON TOWN PROPERTY

WHEREAS, from time to time, the Town Council has received requests from persons who wish to hunt on Town property, including bow hunting as well as with firearms, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizes that hunting is popular and traditional and that most hunters carefully observe the best safety practices, and

WHEREAS, with an over-riding concern for the safety of all persons who may be on or near town properties, the Town Council has considered the other recreational uses of both open and forested town property, along with such factors as the proximity of homes and the widespread, year-round use of many town properties for non-hunting forms of recreation, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that it is the policy of the Groton Town Council that hunting by any means is not to be permitted on town properties.

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0233

Resolution Approving Amount of Bonds to be Issued in FYE 2009

RESOLUTIONS APPROVING AMOUNT OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO BE SOLD

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton authorized \$26,100,000 school bonds for a new elementary school (Catherine Kolnaski Elementary School) pursuant to Ordinance No. 258, and

WHEREAS, \$350,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$5,005,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2005, of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$25,750,000, and

WHEREAS, \$6,000,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$16,570,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2006, of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds and the receipt of grants in the amount of \$859,791, the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$18,890,209, and

WHEREAS, \$1,500,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$15,500,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2007 (Lot A), of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds and the receipt of grants in the amount of \$12,424,258, the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$5,825,742, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 258 authorizes the Town Council to determine the amount of bonds to be sold, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$1,500,000 bonds be sold pursuant to said Ordinance.

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton authorized \$20,800,000 school bonds for a new elementary school on the site of the former Freeman-Hathaway Elementary School (Northeast Academy) pursuant to Ordinance No. 259, and

WHEREAS, \$310,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$5,005,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2005, of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$20,490,000, and

WHEREAS, \$4,000,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$16,570,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2006, of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds and the receipt of grants in the amount of \$749,460 the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$15,740,540, and

WHEREAS, \$3,200,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$15,500,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2007 (Lot A), of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds and the receipt of grants in the amount of \$9,193,506 the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$4,096,494, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 259 authorizes the Town Council to determine the amount of bonds to be sold, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$600,000 bonds be sold pursuant to said Ordinance.

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton authorized \$45,000,000 school bonds for Phase I of renovations and additions to Fitch High School pursuant to Ordinance No. 260, and

WHEREAS, \$640,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$5,005,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2005, of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$44,360,000, and

WHEREAS, \$5,000,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$16,570,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2006, of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds and the receipt of grants in the amount of \$1,464,674, the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$37,895,326, and

WHEREAS, \$10,750,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$15,500,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2007 (Lot A), of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds and the receipt of grants in the amount of \$9,355,004, the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$19,254,996, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 260 authorizes the Town Council to determine the amount of bonds to be sold, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$1,000,000 bonds be sold pursuant to said Ordinance.

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton authorized \$1,385,000 general purpose bonds for design and

construction of a replacement Animal Shelter pursuant to Ordinance No. 271, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 271 authorizes the Town Council to determine the amount of bonds to be sold, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$1,200,000 bonds be sold pursuant to said Ordinance.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Sheets questioned whether the bonds would be sold regardless of price and requested the Finance Director to address this issue.

The Finance Director, Sal Pandolfo, gave a brief summary of the bond climate by relaying information about recent transactions in Connecticut, namely Shelton and Avon.

Councilor Sheets asked whether there is a limit that would trigger further authorization from the Council. The Town Manager replied that to his knowledge there is no policy of this type, and that the Town has relied on the staff's judgment in the past.

Councilor O'Beirne questioned whether the Town is obligated to accept the lowest bid. The Finance Director stated that the Town is not required to accept the lowest bid. The Town has traditionally utilized the competitive bid process, but negotiating a sale is always an option.

The Town Manager stated that the Town has options, and even if it had to lock in at a higher rate, there is always the possibility of renegotiating at a later time.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0238

Resolution Approving Amount of General Obligation Sewer Bonds

RESOLUTION APPROVING AMOUNT OF GENERAL OBLIGATION SEWER BONDS TO BE SOLD

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton authorized \$6,381,200 sewer bonds for Fort Hill sewer rehabilitation pursuant to Ordinance No. 265, and

WHEREAS, \$3,000,000 principal amount of such bonds were sold as part of \$3,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Issue of 2007 (Lot B), of the Town, and upon the issuance of such bonds the total amount of such bonds remaining authorized but unissued was reduced to \$3,381,200, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 265 authorizes the Town Council to determine the amount of bonds to be sold, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$3,250,000 bonds be sold pursuant to said Ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 6:46 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Sheets and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant